DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 766 EA 031 631

AUTHOR Hart, E. Wayne; Kirkland, Karen
TITLE Using Your Executive Coach. For the Practicing Manager. An Ideas into Action Guidebook.
INSTITUTION Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC.
REPORT NO CCL-415
ISBN ISBN-1-882197-69-0
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 35p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Creative Leadership, Attn: Publications, P.O. Box 26300, Greensboro, NC 27438-6300 ($8.95; bulk discounts). Tel: 336-545-2810; Fax: 336-282-3284; Web site: http://www.ccl.org/index.shtml.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Behavior; Consultants; Corporate Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *Management Development; *Professional Continuing Education; *Professional Development; Professional Training

ABSTRACT

Executive coaching is an increasingly popular means of accelerating professional growth and enhancing managerial performance. Unlike most other training and development options, coaching is completely personalized and private. This guide offers practical suggestions and tips to aid in understanding the nature of a coaching engagement and in obtaining the most value out of it. Readiness is key to successful coaching results because time and effort will be required to address challenges that will be set up throughout the engagement. Coaching engagements usually last from 6 to 18 months and are structured to result in significant, specific, and measurable changes in behavior. Coaching should focus on leveraging strengths, rather than fixing deficiencies. The ongoing elements of the engagement are assessment, challenge, and support. Resistance to making behavior changes is to be expected and often surfaces as negative feelings about the coach. This guide shows how these feelings can be recognized and overcome, thus enhancing the collaborative nature of the engagement. The most important attribute that can be brought to the coaching engagement is receptivity to new ideas and openness to different ways of acting in the world. (Contains 14 references.) (RT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

EA

ED 462 766

FOR THE PRACTICING MANAGER

IDEAS INTO ACTION GUIDEBOOKS

Using Your Executive Coach

E. Wayne Hart and Karen Kirkland

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Moorhead

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

EA 031631

Center for Creative Leadership

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AN IDEAS INTO ACTION GUIDEBOOK

Using Your Executive Coach

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ideas Into Action Guidebooks

Aimed at managers and executives who are concerned with their own and others' development, each guidebook in this series gives specific advice on how to complete a developmental task or solve a leadership problem.

Lead Contributors	E. Wayne Hart
	Karen Kirkland
Guidebook Advisory Group	Victoria A. Guthrie
	Cynthia D. McCauley
	Russ S. Moxley
Director of Publications	Martin Wilcox
Editor	Peter Scisco
Writer	Janet Fox
Design and Layout	Joanne Ferguson
Contributing Artist	Laura J. Gibson

Copyright ©2001 Center for Creative Leadership.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Printed in the United States of America.

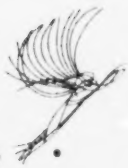
CCL No. 415
ISBN No. 1-882197-69-0

Center for Creative Leadership
Post Office Box 26300
Greensboro, North Carolina 27438-6300
336-288-7210

AN IDEAS INTO ACTION GUIDEBOOK

Using Your Executive Coach

E. Wayne Hart and Karen Kirkland



Center for
Creative Leadership
leadership. learning. life.

The Ideas Into Action Guidebook Series

This series of guidebooks draws on the practical knowledge that the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) has generated in the course of more than thirty years of research and educational activity conducted in partnership with hundreds of thousands of managers and executives. Much of this knowledge is shared – in a way that is distinct from the typical university department, professional association, or consultancy. CCL is not simply a collection of individual experts, although the individual credentials of its staff are impressive; rather it is a community, with its members holding certain principles in common and working together to understand and generate practical responses to today's leadership and organizational challenges.

The purpose of the series is to provide managers with specific advice on how to complete a developmental task or solve a leadership challenge. In doing that the series carries out CCL's mission to advance the understanding, practice, and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide. We think you will find the Ideas Into Action Guidebooks an important addition to your leadership toolkit.

Other guidebooks currently available:

- *Ongoing Feedback: How to Get It, How to Use It*
- *Becoming a More Versatile Learner*
- *Reaching Your Development Goals*
- *Giving Feedback to Subordinates*
- *Three Keys to Development: Defining and Meeting Your Leadership Challenges*
- *Feedback That Works: How to Build and Deliver Your Message*
- *Communicating Across Cultures*
- *Learning from Life: Turning Life's Lessons into Leadership Experience*
- *Keeping Your Career on Track: Twenty Success Strategies*
- *Preparing for Development: Making the Most of Formal Leadership Programs*
- *Choosing an Executive Coach*
- *Setting Your Development Goals: Start with Your Values*
- *Do You Really Need a Team?*
- *Building Resiliency: How to Thrive in Times of Change*
- *How to Form a Team: Five Keys to High Performance*

Table of Contents

7 **What Is Executive Coaching?**

7 **Getting Ready for an Executive Coach**

9 **Establishing the Coaching Relationship**

11 **Working with Your Executive Coach**

Using Your Coach for Assessment

Using Your Coach for Challenge

Using Your Coach for Support

21 **Handling a Resistance to Coaching**

24 **Building on the Coaching Relationship**

27 **Suggested Readings**

28 **Background**

30 **Key Point Summary**

Executive Brief

If you are a manager or executive who is beginning a coaching engagement or who is considering a developmental plan that calls for an executive coach, you need more than a desire to improve your leadership capabilities. You also need to understand how to get the most from your work with a professional coach. This guide can help you to understand the unique nature of a coaching engagement and to assess your readiness to embark on this method of professional development. The book describes the three main elements of a coaching engagement – assessment, challenge, and support – and provides information on how you can collaborate with your coach in each of these aspects to get the maximum benefits from coaching. You will also learn how to recognize and overcome your resistance to the disruption and discomfort brought about by the behavioral changes that coaching addresses.

What Is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is a formal engagement in which a qualified coach works with an organizational leader in a series of dynamic, confidential sessions designed to establish and achieve clear goals that will result in improved managerial performance. The relationship between a manager and a coach is different from other kinds of professional relationships. For example, a coaching relationship focuses on enhancing performance while a mentoring relationship usually has broader objectives. An executive coach is more involved in execution and outcome assessment than the typical consultant. A coach isn't an authority figure.

Above all, the relationship between an executive and a coach is a collaborative one. Together, you and your coach will assess your circumstances, strengths, weaknesses, and developmental opportunities. You will work with your coach to create developmental action plans. After you execute the plans, you and your coach will review the results and define new action plans to further your growth. Throughout this process, the level of benefits you receive from using a coach is directly related to your willingness and ability to take an active role in every aspect of the coaching engagement.

Getting Ready for an Executive Coach

In some circles, having a coach is something to brag about, something that shows you've arrived. An executive coach is a perk to which some top executives feel entitled and that some leaders negotiate as part of their total compensation and benefits package.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Some companies provide coaching initiatives for new employees, employees taking new positions, and high-potential employees.

Coaching is sometimes recommended to managers whose performance is below expectations or whose current capabilities fall short of those the organization believes necessary for success at the next level (a sign that the organization is willing to invest in its own future and the future of its employees). Most coaching engagements, however, arise from managers who seek an effective way to make progress on specific developmental goals they have established and who recognize coaching as an expedient way to reach those goals.

Your perception of coaching greatly affects your readiness to benefit from having a coach. If it's just another status symbol, it's unlikely that you'll put in the honest effort it takes to change any behavior. If you think that your organization is punishing you by asking you to get coaching, you may feel that it's demeaning and a waste of time. If you have a positive perception of coaching and think it could help you, you've taken the first step toward realizing its benefits. Still, you should assess your own readiness for what will be a serious commitment and an occasionally uncomfortable experience.

As you answer the questions in the Coaching Readiness Worksheet (pages 22-23), you may be surprised to realize that you have some resistance to engaging an executive coach. You may feel wary about the time commitment, skeptical about the costs and benefits, or simply be uncomfortable with the idea of discussing your shortcomings and weaknesses.

When you work with a coach you can expect to change your skills and your behaviors to develop better leadership abilities. Resistance to any kind of personal change is normal, realistic, and to be expected. It's not a light decision to engage an executive

coach. Only you can accurately assess your thoughts, feelings, and needs.

If the prospect feels like too much of a burden or if you think you would really resent the expenditure of time and money, you may not be ready for an executive coach. If you have some negative feelings but generally look forward to improving your leadership abilities, you can likely go ahead with confidence. If you decide you're ready to benefit from coaching, take time to find a well-qualified coach with whom you can relate on a personal level. Your selecting the right coach has a dramatic effect on the results of the coaching engagement. [*Choosing an Executive Coach*, another title in the CCL Press Ideas Into Action guidebook series, provides a step-by-step approach to finding and hiring a coach.]

Establishing the Coaching Relationship

After you have chosen a coach whom you feel you can respect and trust, you will want to establish some ground rules for how you will work together. Most coaches have considerable flexibility in how they work, so it's your responsibility and to your advantage to establish terms that work best for you.

Now is also the time for some honest self-appraisal. An effective coaching relationship, one that accelerates your leadership development, will push you beyond your familiar limits. You will be challenged to move out of your comfort zone and to practice behaviors that may at first feel unnatural and awkward. Therefore you should structure your coaching engagement in the way that is most likely to give you the encouragement, reinforcement, and support that you need to grow, and make your expectations crystal clear.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Do you need face-to-face meetings with the coach, or will phone conversations be sufficient?

One of the benefits to executive coaching is that professional coaches can work with you in many ways: face-to-face, over the phone, by e-mail, and in combinations of these. You may feel more comfortable discussing feelings and behavior when you can't see the other person's expressions. Or you may dislike "disembodied" conversation. You may find it easy to cancel phone conferences when the going gets rough but more difficult to postpone face-to-face meetings. You may think you're more likely to follow through on your commitment if the sessions are limited to regular, brief, weekly phone calls before your workday starts. Or you may think you'll do best with some initial fairly lengthy personal meetings, followed with a combination of phone calls and e-mail communications. Although you'll have the option of changing the frequency, duration, and mode of coaching sessions, it's worth thinking about at the beginning of your coaching relationship.

What kind of schedule will work best for you?

The success of coaching depends on what you do between coaching sessions. As you go about your daily routine, you will be working on achieving the goals that you and the coach have set. Think about how often you will need to reconnect with the coach – to discuss barriers and problems, to get answers to questions you may have, to report and acknowledge progress.

How will payments be handled?

Your organization may bear the costs or you may pay for the coaching yourself. Ask all the questions you have about fees at the start so that there will be no unpleasant surprises later on. Establish when payments will be due. Find out if the coach wants a certain percentage of the fees in advance. Ask if you will be charged for

cancelled appointments. Ask what will happen if you are forced to prematurely discontinue the coaching engagement.

What assurances of confidentiality do you need?

Coaching will only be effective for you if you feel free to divulge a considerable amount of "inside" information about yourself, your co-workers, your company, and even your personal life. You must get assurance that the frank discussions you have with your coach will not be communicated in any way to anyone you have not specifically authorized to receive the information.

Working with Your Executive Coach

Coaching is all about change – often, developmental change. When you hire a coach you set a process in motion for effecting that change. The elements of a coaching engagement are ongoing assessment, challenge, and support. You may think that each of those is the responsibility of the coach and what the coach is trained and hired to do. But in fact you will get much more benefit from coaching if you are an active participant in every aspect of the engagement.

Using Your Coach for Assessment

The initial phase of the coaching engagement is an assessment – a baseline picture of your current situation and your level of skills. Your assessment might be designed to elicit information on:

- how you see yourself
- how others see you
- who your advocates are

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Your Coaching Relationship: Confidentiality and Security

As you begin a coaching relationship, and during the time you work with your executive coach, there are several key issues to which you should pay attention. Perhaps the most important is related to issues of confidentiality and security – components of the privacy you're entitled to as an executive coach's client. Coaching almost always involves the discussion of sensitive information that you want to be sure doesn't leak. Here are some suggestions for keeping private information private:

Define access. Telling others about your coaching engagement and your goals is your choice. Only you know the organizational culture in which you operate. There are advantages to letting other people know. Your boss and your colleagues can provide feedback on performance changes, for example, and family members can provide support and encouragement as you address challenges. If you tell others about your coaching engagement, let your coach know who those people are and how they might assist you.

Set boundaries. Engaging a coach doesn't mean that you have to open up every aspect of your personal and working life. Only you can determine those areas in which your coach can be of benefit and those areas in which your coach need not be involved. If you've given your coach permission to interview your colleagues, friends, and family members, for example, you can specify that certain topics be off limits. If you've given the coach permission to join you at an important meeting, you can specify how you want him or her introduced.

Establish a paper trail. Without a doubt your coach should be absolutely trustworthy regarding your conversations, your goals, your concerns, and your progress. Your coach's record-keeping system should be just as trustworthy. If your coach expects you to send journals, for example, what shipping service will be used? What happens to those journals after the coach reads them? (Confidentiality and ownership of records such as journals

and session notes are governed by law if your coach is a licensed psychologist.) It is customary for the coach to return written journals but to keep most other notes. It's also customary, and sometimes governed by law, that you have access to session notes or to a summary of those notes at any time, usually by appointment.

Trust and verify. Most coaches are well aware of the need for absolute discretion – and you should never work with a coach you don't trust. You can communicate the importance you attach to confidentiality by spelling out the details in a written contract. Use a contract to define boundaries, to set expectations regarding records and written documents, and to list those other people with whom your coach can and cannot discuss your developmental efforts. More broadly, a contract can contain instructions about the confidentiality of company information to protect sensitive information.

- who your enemies are
- the dynamics and politics of your organization
- personal strengths that can be leveraged
- personal shortcomings that can be improved.

The coach will almost certainly have you complete some written assessment instruments that provide information on your leadership style, your leadership competencies and capabilities, your skill at building and managing relationships, and other characteristics. Your coach may ask your permission to have some of your colleagues, your direct reports, and your boss complete similar survey instruments. Your coach may want to interview them and, in some cases, interview your spouse or other family members. The coach you've chosen may want to review performance appraisals. A coach might accompany you at work so he or she can see how you interact with others, how you conduct meetings, and

how you present ideas. You can veto any of these activities, but all of them help your coach create a complete picture of you fairly quickly and enable him or her to accurately focus on the areas that will make the most difference in your managerial effectiveness.

Context for assessment. In addition to any formal assessment exercises and activities, it's best to provide your coach with other relevant information about yourself and your world. You operate within a unique context of work and personal relationships, and your coach needs to be able to understand you in the context of your situation. Bring your coach into the picture by describing:

- the industry you work in, and the particular issues and challenges it faces
- the organization you work for and its culture
- your home life and how that intersects with your work (Do you talk with your spouse about your work? Do you have an office at home? Do you try to keep work and family strictly separate?)
- your health and habits and personal preferences.

Ongoing assessment. Because executive coaching is meant to produce visible, measurable changes over a period of months, not all assessments take place at the outset of your coaching engagement. Your coach should assess your progress at intervals during the course of your working together. Decide with your coach how results will be measured. You may have your coach interview your boss, for example, to see what behavior changes he or she has observed. Your coach may ask the people who previously provided written or oral assessments to complete follow-up assessments. You may choose to supply some kind of self-assessment using a formal assessment instrument or a set of questions determined early on in the coaching process.

Using Your Coach for Challenge

One of your coach's jobs is to help you identify challenges and develop plans for overcoming them. Challenges can be external obstacles, like limited resources or conflicting directions from within your organization, or internal factors, like your own resistance or an insufficient set of skills. Plans for overcoming obstacles are based on your working with your coach to identify developmental objectives that you can achieve by executing specific, behavioral action plans. These action plans are like homework assignments – single objectives you work to meet by the time of your next coaching session. You have an important role in collaborating with your coach to identify the obstacles, set realistic "stretch" goals, and create meaningful action plans to improve your leadership effectiveness.

For example, you may have received feedback that the meetings you lead are terribly ineffective and even a waste of time. Regular meetings are essential to your workgroup's success, but your group hates and dreads its weekly meetings. In this instance a goal you might set for yourself would be to run efficient, effective, and productive meetings.

To continue the example, it's likely that a combination of factors contributes to making your meetings so unendurable. Perhaps one group member monopolizes the group's time, there isn't a clear understanding of which agenda items are for information only and which contribute to decisions, you never have a written agenda, and a personality conflict between two of the group's members creates a tense atmosphere at every meeting. It's not likely that you can resolve all those issues before your next coaching session.

With your coach's guidance, however, you can break the final objective into incremental goals. Maybe the goal for one week is to

learn to structure an effective meeting and to actually set a clear agenda for the next team meeting. After you have achieved that goal your next task might be to deal with the issue of the group member who takes up too much time. Reaching that goal might involve your role-playing with your coach to figure out how to give constructive feedback to that group member. After meeting that goal you might work on your conflict-resolution skills so that you can help warring staff members resolve their differences. Each of these tasks builds toward your main objective (in this example, to run effective meetings).

Most of the challenges you face will require this kind of step-by-step approach. As you work with your coach, CCL recommends you use the "SMART" approach to goal setting – the assignments to which you agree should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed.

Set SMART Goals for Smart Results

Think about how you can turn the challenges of your coaching assignments into small, specific steps that will move you in the right direction. Use the SMART goal process to articulate those steps:

Specific. Write your goal with as much detail as possible.

Measurable. Identify quantitative targets for tracking your progress and results.

Attainable. Make certain that it is possible to achieve the desired result.

Realistic. Acknowledge the practical requirements necessary to accomplish the goal.

Timed. Build in specific deadlines.

Setting your challenges. Your coach should be skilled at conceptualizing the incremental steps that will help you reach your ultimate goal. But you must decide if each task along the way is set at the right level. Work with your coach to set goals that stretch your

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

skills and knowledge but that aren't so great a stretch as to be out of reach.

Setting the targets either too high or too low can subvert the coaching process. It's critical, therefore, that you tell your coach if the suggested goal is too easy or too hard. Some coaches are inclined to make the incremental goals much too easy. If that happens, you must make it clear that you can handle more and that you expect to be challenged. You're not paying the coach to make you feel good. You're paying for assistance in reaching developmental goals that matter to you.

Challenges can change. Although the ultimate developmental goal you set with your coach is likely to remain constant during the course of your coaching relationship, the challenges you take on in moving toward that goal can change according to circumstances. A task that is reasonable during a normal week, for example, may be unreasonable during a week you are moving elderly parents into a nursing home or during a week you're having oral surgery. During the course of your coaching engagement be honest with yourself and your coach about what is realistic in terms of the tasks you can accomplish. You can use the following questions to help you evaluate each assignment in terms of your current situation.

- *Are there any external obstacles to completing your task?*
  You might not have the authority or the resources to take some of the steps required to complete an assignment. An event in your personal life may be demanding extra time and attention.

- *Will the assignment stretch your skills and knowledge?*
  In order to develop, you need to take on some challenges and practice some behaviors that are unfamiliar and to some extent uncomfortable. If you're not a little uncomfortable or nervous about completing a task, the assignment may be too easy.

Steering a Developmental Course

By working with your executive coach you can meet long-term goals that strengthen your leadership skills. One of the keys to meeting those goals is to develop, with your coach, tasks that stretch your abilities so you can develop new skills. Although your coach may have gathered information about your skills and aptitudes at the start of the coaching process, you are the best source of determining when tasks are too difficult or too easy for your abilities.

If your task is too difficult:

- you won't be able to accomplish it in the time allotted
- you may avoid working on that assignment
- you may work on it but become discouraged about yourself and the coaching process
- you may be inclined to cancel or "forget" your next coaching session because you haven't met the task
- you may decide the coach is not skilled enough.

If your task is too easy:

- you may feel energized by your accomplishments when actually you have made very little progress
- you may think the coach has seriously underestimated your ability, and wonder why you have given the impression of being so unskilled
- you may decide that coaching is a frivolous process
- you may decide that your coach is too elementary and is unable to help you make significant performance improvements.

→ *Does the assignment set you up for failure?*

If your task is too much of a stretch, you won't succeed and you may not even make the attempt. Tell your coach if the assignment is too daunting. Work with your coach to find the right assignment.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

➙ *What will you do when you run into obstacles?*
Obstacles – both internal and external – are to be expected. What's your plan for when the going gets rough? Will you call the coach? Will you review some particular materials? Discuss your course of action with your coach when your new behavior meets with resistance or your new skill brings unintended consequences.

Using Your Coach for Support

You and your coach will work together to devise the developmental action plan that will enable you to reach your goal of improved leadership effectiveness. Your part in that process is to carry out that action plan and to complete the homework. Your coach's part is to give you support as you carry out the plan. Your coach can support you best if you are completely honest about what you want to accomplish and what you need to reach that goal. Supply your coach with detailed information about the kind of support you find most helpful and the people to whom you can turn for support. Work with your coach to create a developmental support network.

Helpful support. As you and your coach work together and develop a high degree of trust, your coach will be better able to offer you many kinds of support. Different kinds of support serve different purposes. Some kinds of support are more direct than others, and some are more helpful in some situations than others. Below is a description of different supportive roles your coach can play.

➙ *Listening.* Sometimes you need a sounding board for your ideas or your frustrations. You may need to think out loud, to explore a number of possibilities and scenarios, to review events, and to draw conclusions. Your coach can support you by listening and

reflecting back what he or she has heard you say, giving you the chance to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges you face and how you might address them. Be willing to discuss these issues with your coach.

- *Accountability*. A valuable service that your coach will provide is to hold you accountable for performing your action plans. The fact that your coach counts on you to execute those plans is motivating and supportive. Your reporting your progress to the coach keeps you focused.
- *Encouragement*. From time to time during your coaching engagement you may feel discouraged. You may feel stuck or even think that you've taken a step backward. Such plateaus are part of any kind of personal change. Your coach will know how to keep you motivated and focused on your tasks and your ultimate goal. Let your coach know what kind of encouragement works best for you.
- *Consultation*. You may take on a developmental assignment only to discover that your behavior isn't working well or is producing unexpected and unwanted consequences. Your coach can work with you to create other options, to help put things in perspective, and to recommend ways to fine-tune your learning experience.
- *Celebration*. When you have a breakthrough in your performance it's important to recognize that achievement. Your coach can support you when it's inappropriate for you to celebrate with direct reports, colleagues, or your boss. By talking with your coach about your successes you can find reinforcement for further developmental tasks.

Your coach isn't the only source of support you can access during your developmental efforts. But your coach can, with your

help, identify and create support resources among your personal and professional network. Line up the support you need in advance of your developmental efforts. Tell the people you trust what you're doing and how they can best help you. You can use the following questions to help you think of additional developmental support resources.

- *Who else can give you the support you want?*
  Do you have a friend with whom you like to "process" ideas and experiences? Will your spouse empathize with you and encourage you when you meet a difficult task? A family member may let you role-play some of the skills you are trying to develop. Will your boss let you know when he or she sees improvement in your handling of a situation?

- *What kind of rewards can you give yourself?*
  Change is difficult. In the same way that your coach can help you to celebrate your success along the way, you can treat yourself with a special reward when you reach specific milestones, complete assignments, and accomplish goals.

Handling a Resistance to Coaching

Your leadership experience has no doubt taught you that change is usually met with some kind of resistance. You can probably think of many instances when employees resisted new developments (for example, a new computer system, a new boss, a new process, or a new policy). You've probably also observed that resistance takes many forms. Some people are up-front and vocal about their dislike of change. Some acknowledge the changes but don't actually adopt

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Coaching Readiness Worksheet

Darken the circle beneath each statement that best describes your thoughts and feelings relating to working with a professional executive coach. After completing the worksheet examine your answers. What do they say about your readiness to enter into a coaching relationship? Should you contact a coach or do you need more time to prepare your attitude toward development? Do you feel resistant to the idea of an executive coach?

I am willing and able to devote the necessary time to a coaching engagement.

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I have or can make available the time for regular coaching sessions and for any "homework" – such as journal writing, assessments, and developmental activities – that a coach might request.

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I am willing to book coaching sessions as appointments on my calendar and give them high priority.

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

The next 12 to 18 months of my life are likely to be free of unusual demands such as the birth of a new baby or a family relocation.

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I want to make changes for myself, not for someone else.

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Coaching is worth the money it costs and is more valuable than the free advice I can get from friends, family, and colleagues.

Strongly Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Disagree

Hiring a coach is not a sign of weakness but a worthwhile developmental strategy.

Strongly Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Disagree

I have no problem in telling others that I have engaged a professional executive coach.

Strongly Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Disagree

I don't feel a high degree of personal resistance to engaging an executive coach.

Strongly Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Disagree

them. Others might take covert action to sabotage the new way of doing things.

To get the most from your coaching experience, pay attention to behaviors of your own that may undermine the developmental process. If your coaching engagement isn't proceeding as well as you think it should, that doesn't necessarily mean your coach is inept. It's possible that you are hindering your own progress by resisting the changes you need to make. Resistance can be difficult to recognize when it's your own and when the changes are so personal. The following list may indicate you are feeling resistant to the changes you and your coach are trying to bring about.

- You're too busy to keep your appointments with the coach.
- You become intensely irritated with the coach's mannerisms or way of speaking or appearance.
- You start feeling unclear about the benefits of coaching.
- You're frustrated that change isn't happening as fast and easily as you expected.
- You blame the coach for irritation, boredom, or frustration that you are experiencing.

None of these feelings indicates that there is anything wrong with the coach or the coaching relationship. All of them are examples of discomfort you may have when confronting change. To get the full benefit of coaching, tell your coach about your discomfort. In the coaching session it's appropriate and desirable to raise any problems you're experiencing, even if it's only a nagging worry, a vague fear, or a minor irritation. By revealing and discussing your resistance you can help clear the way toward further personal and leadership development.

Building on the Coaching Relationship

You enter into a coaching relationship to help you improve your managerial performance and leadership effectiveness. Past success in learning new skills and putting them into action doesn't guarantee that you can easily accomplish the goals you and your coach have agreed upon. In fact, some of the attitudes and habits that have enabled you to achieve your level of professional success may actually hinder your progress when you work with a coach.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For example, if you've built success because of your take-charge attitude and your willingness to take risks without full consensus of a group, then you may have to be more relaxed and confiding with your coach than you might normally be in your work relationships. You may have to be more expressive, more vulnerable, and more candid with your coach than you may allow yourself to be in your usual professional role. Here are some key points to keep in mind for maintaining the effectiveness of your coaching relationship.

- *It's not your job to control the coaching process.* When you work with a coach, be prepared to surrender some of your need to be in control. Rather than displaying your strength and power, you will have to expose some of your weakness. You have to be able to admit you need help and to ask for it.

- *It's not productive to defend the status quo.* In your professional life you may often feel a need to defend your decisions and justify your actions. When working with your coach, highlighting your strengths is important, but it's more important that you improve the weaknesses in your performance by changing your behaviors and learning new skills.

- *It's not necessary to put a positive spin on your situation.* At work you may often be called on to assure people that the organization's plan is on track, projects are on schedule, and the news is good. With your coach, you should never varnish the truth. Your coach can help you best when he or she is aware of your discomfort, knows what the obstacles to your development are, and understands why you feel unable to achieve the goals the two of you have set.

➔ *It's not necessary to compete with your coach.* Managers who rise to a high level in their organizations may automatically and almost unconsciously regard others as potential rivals and threats. They may behave in ways that maintain their position and keep others at a safe distance. In a coaching relationship, maneuvers such as withholding information, pulling rank, and scoring debating points only waste time. Openness and equal cooperation between you and your coach are what enable the process to work.

In your coaching relationship it's not necessary to have all of the answers to every challenge. The coaching process is, after all, a developmental relationship. It's a long-term process. It requires you to invest time, energy, and trust in the coach you have selected. Above all, it requires you to take an active role in the process and to be receptive to new ways of understanding yourself, to new perspectives, and to new ways of acting.

Using your executive coach as a developmental partner provides an unusually rich opportunity to learn, reflect, change, and grow. Through your work together you develop the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that will enable you to increase your leadership effectiveness. Make the most of your coaching engagement by taking responsibility for your development, by cultivating a close relationship with your coach, and by opening yourself to deeper insight and greater personal effectiveness. The benefits will go not just to you but also to your organization and to the people closest to you.

Suggested Readings

Douglas, C. A. (1997). *Formal mentoring programs in organizations: An annotated bibliography.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Douglas, C. A., & Morley, W. H. (2000). *Executive coaching: An annotated bibliography.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Fitzgerald, C., & Berger, J. G. (2002). *Executive coaching: Practices and perspectives.* Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.

Goldsmith, M., Kaye, B. L., & Shelton, K. (Eds.). (2000). *Learning journeys: Top management experts share hard-earned lessons on becoming great mentors and leaders.* Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.

Goldsmith, M., Lyons, L., & Freas, A. (2000). *Coaching for leadership: How the world's greatest coaches help leaders learn.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Guthrie, V. A. (1999). *Coaching for action: A report on long-term advising in a program context.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Hudson, F. M. (1999). *The handbook of coaching: A comprehensive resource guide for managers, executives, consultants, and human resource professionals.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kaplan, R. E. (1999). *Internalizing strengths: An overlooked way of overcoming weaknesses in managers.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Kilburg, R. R. (2000). *Executive coaching: Developing managerial wisdom in a world of chaos.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kirkland, K., & Hart, W. (2001). *Choosing an executive coach.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Lee, R. J., & King, S. N. (2001). *Discovering the leader in you: A guide to realizing your personal leadership potential.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Moxley, R. S. (2000). *Leadership and spirit: Breathing new vitality and energy into individuals and organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Stephenson, P. (2000). *Executive coaching: Lead, develop, retain motivated talented people.* Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education Australia.

Witherspoon, R., & White, R. P. (1997). *Four essential ways that coaching can help executives.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Background

CCL's experience with executive coaching dates back to its beginnings in the early 1970s and its focus on feedback-intensive developmental experiences. By the mid-1980s CCL had developed a coaching and support role that played a significant part in the developmental experiences of CCL clients participating in such programs as LeaderLab® and the Awareness Program for Executive Excellence (APEX)®. The development of that coaching role and CCL's experience in working with that process now form the kernel of CCL's Coaching for Results program, which includes Follow-on Coaching as a developmental component.

Throughout all of this work, CCL has built an executive-coaching process that adheres to its respect for individuals and diversity, focuses on building on the leader's existing strengths, and provides a confidential, safe setting in which serious developmental work can be accomplished. Based on its long experience in working with such long-term coaching relationships, CCL has noted and agreed upon a number of best practices:

- a completely voluntary engagement for both the coach and client
- an explanation of what coaching is and is not
- the use and leverage of the client's abundant intelligence and talent
- fully informed consent regarding confidentiality or the terms of sharing of information with organizational stakeholders
- careful protection of assessment information, written records, and the client's identity

- a subjective feeling of safety to promote optimum learning
- a solution-focused approach
- an action-learning approach
- a focus on managing change and stimulating innovation
- clearly stated session limits and specific developmental goals
- an exclusion of corporate selection or promotion decisions
- a simple, focused approach that may be guided by a mix of assessment, challenge, and support strategies
- an option for easy termination at any time
- a firm grounding in CCL research and knowledge
- a firm grounding in current academic and applied knowledge in business and psychology
- an understanding that development is a life-long process
- an openness to the use of a wide variety of theories and tools
- an expectation of continuously evaluating and improving the coaching relationship
- the use of ongoing quality control procedures to ensure excellence.

CCL believes that it's only in the context of an ongoing relationship – including mutual honesty, trust, and positive regard – that truly effective coaching can occur. It also believes that managers who engage a professional executive coach can achieve the benefits they seek only when they take an active role in the coaching process and take responsibility for their own leadership development.

Key Point Summary

Executive coaching is an increasingly popular means of accelerating professional growth and enhancing managerial performance. Unlike most other training and development options, coaching is completely personalized and private. A long-term coaching relationship can deliver significant improvements to a manager's leadership effectiveness, but choosing and hiring a coach isn't a guarantee of success.

Readiness is key to successful coaching results. If you are considering working with a coach, you should first take stock of your attitudes, your work circumstances, and your time constraints. You should make sure that you are prepared to put in the time and effort that will be required to address the challenges that will be set for you throughout the engagement.

Coaching engagements usually last from six to eighteen months and are structured to result in significant, specific, measurable changes in behavior. Getting the full benefit of coaching will require working collaboratively with the coach in every aspect of the engagement, beginning with mutually determining the schedule, format, and guidelines for coaching sessions.

Coaching should focus on leveraging your strengths, rather than fixing deficiencies. The ongoing elements of the coaching engagement are assessment, challenge, and support. A coach that works with you within all of these areas can help you reach the developmental goals you seek by helping you gain the skills you need and practice the behaviors that reflect your ability as a leader.

Resistance to making behavior changes is to be expected and often surfaces as negative feelings about the coach. The most important attribute you can bring to your coaching engagement is receptivity to new ideas and openness to different ways of acting in the world.

ORDER FORM

To order, complete and return a copy of this form or contact the Center's Publication Area at: Post Office Box 26300 • Greensboro, NC 27438-6300 • Phone 336-545-2810 • Fax 336-282-3284. You can also order via the Center's online bookstore at www.ccl.org/publications

	QUANTITY	SUBTOTAL
❑ I would like to order additional copies of **Using Your Executive Coach** (#415) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ I would like to order other Ideas Into Action Guidebooks.		
❑ **Ongoing Feedback** (#400) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Reaching Your Development Goals** (#401) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Becoming a More Versatile Learner** (#402) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Giving Feedback to Subordinates** (#403) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Three Keys to Development** (#404) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Feedback That Works** (#405) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Communicating Across Cultures** (#406) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Learning from Life** (#407) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Keeping Your Career on Track** (#408) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Preparing for Development** (#409) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Choosing an Executive Coach** (#410) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Setting Your Development Goals** (#411) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Do You Really Need a Team?** (#412) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Building Resiliency** (#413) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **How to Form a Team** (#414) $8.95 ea.*		
❑ **Feedback Package** (#724; includes #400, #403, #405) $17.95 ea.		
❑ **Individual Leadership Development Package** (#726; includes #401, #404, #409, #411) $26.95 ea.		
Add sales tax if resident of CA (7.5%), CO (6%), NC (6.5%)	SALES TAX	
U.S. shipping (UPS Ground – $4 for 1st book; $0.95 each additional book) Non-U.S. shipping (Express International – $20 for 1st book; $5 each additional book)	SHIPPING	
CCL's Federal Tax ID #23-707-9591	TOTAL	

***Single title quantity discounts: 5-99 – $7.95; 100-499 – $6.50; 500+ – $5.95**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DISCOUNTS ARE AVAILABLE

IF ORDERING BY MAIL OR FAX, PLEASE COMPLETE INFORMATION BELOW.

PAYMENT

❑ My check or money order is enclosed. **(Prepayment required for orders less than $100.)**

❑ Charge my order, plus shipping, to my credit card.

❑ American Express ❑ Discover ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa

Acct. # _____ Expiration Date: Mo./Yr. _____

Name as appears on card _____

Signature of card holder _____

SHIP TO

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____

Your telephone number is required for shipping.

❑ CHECK HERE TO RECEIVE A COMPLETE GUIDE TO CCL PUBLICATIONS.

❑ CHECK HERE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT CCL PROGRAMS AND PRODUCTS.

ORDER BY PHONE: 336-545-2810 • ONLINE: WWW.CCL.ORG/PUBLICATIONS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FOR THE PRACTICING MANAGER

Using Your Executive Coach

Managers who are considering a developmental plan that calls for an executive coach need more than a desire to improve their leadership capabilities. They also need to understand how to get the most from their work with a professional coach. This guidebook can help managers understand the unique nature of a coaching engagement and to assess their readiness to embark on this method of professional development. It describes the three main elements of a coaching engagement – assessment, challenge, and support – and provides information on how a manager can collaborate with a coach in each of these aspects to get the maximum benefits from coaching.

LEAD CONTRIBUTORS

Wayne Hart is a feedback and coaching manager, and a senior faculty member at CCL's San Diego campus. He holds a Ph.D. in psychology and a California Psychology License. Additionally, he has been certified as a Teaching Member of the International Transactional Analysis Association. He has published two books and more than a dozen articles in professional journals.

Karen Kirkland is a licensed clinical psychologist and a feedback and coaching manager at CCL's San Diego campus. She holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Missouri and served previously as Associate Dean of the School of Human Behavior at United States International University in San Diego. In more than eighteen years at CCL she has provided feedback services to hundreds of leaders and executives. She has also written or co-authored fourteen professional articles.

The Center for Creative Leadership is an international, nonprofit educational institution whose mission is to advance the understanding, practice, and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide. We conduct research, produce publications, and provide a broad variety of educational programs and products to leaders and organizations in public, corporate, and nonprofit sectors.

Center for
Creative Leadership
leadership. learning. life.

ISBN 1-882197-69-0

IDEAS INTO ACTION GUIDEBOOKS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 03163)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☑ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").